

*King David's Death, and Solomon's Succession
to the Throne, considered and improved, in*

A

S E R M O N,

OCCASIONED by the

DEATH of His late MAJESTY,

K I N G

GEORGE the SECOND,

A N D T H E

ACCESSION of His present MAJESTY,

K I N G

GEORGE the THIRD.

Preached in *New Broad-Street*, Nov. 2, 1760.

By *JOHN PALMER.* *K*

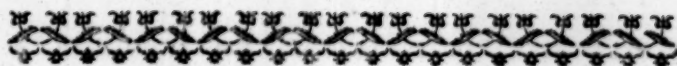
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I CHRONICLES xxix. 27, 28.

-----*Thirty and three years reigned
he in Jerusalem : and he died in
a good old age ; full of days,
riches, and honour : and Solomon
----reigned in his stead.*

OU are at no loss to determine,
in general, as to the intended ap-
plication of the historical passage
now read. The mournful habit
in which most of you appear, bespeaks the
awful event which has directed our thoughts
to a subject of this nature : and there can
be no doubt but that every heart in this as-
sembly deeply feels and deploras the sad
occasion. The removal of a King, whose
character was so respectable, and his reign
so eminently glorious, as those of our late

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SOVEREIGN, is an event, an insensibility of which, in any who had the happiness of living under his government, would argue the grossest stupidity, or basest ingratitude. But this we are not willing to suppose of a single inhabitant of Britain: and by no means could we suffer this awful stroke of Providence to pass without some particular notice from this place. There seems, indeed, to be a peculiar propriety in paying this small tribute of respect to the memory of our departed SOVEREIGN in the places of our religious meetings; (a) seeing that by him we so long enjoyed the full liberty of thus assembling ourselves together; a deed so worthy and important, among the many others which were done to this nation, by his providence, under that of the Most High. And as the brief historical account of the reign and death of King David, contained in the text, appears to be directly and strictly applicable on the present occasion; the attempt which shall now be made to assist your meditations upon it in this view, will, it is hoped, be attended to with candour, and

(a) Acts xxiv. 2.

and not be altogether unacceptable or useless

In pursuance of this, we shall

I. Offer some remarks on the several particulars, of the short account given in the text, of the reign and death of King David; the scope of which will be to illustrate in general, how far what is related of him argues any real excellence of character, or reflects true worth on a Prince.

II. Represent the peculiar obligations which any people are under to the goodness of God, who, as in the case of David, on the removal of a great and valuable King, have the happiness of seeing the peaceful settlement of a successor to the throne, in whom they have just ground for pleasing expectations.

After which, we shall apply the subject, both in reference to our late SOVEREIGN and the present Successor to his throne: with a view to fix on our hearts a grateful sense of the goodness of God, in what we

have enjoyed under the one, and have to hope from the other ; to perpetuate that respectful memory which is due to Him who is now departed, and to establish that affection and loyalty which we ought to maintain towards his RIGHTFUL and PROMISING HEIR, who reigns in his stead.

We are

1. To offer some remarks on the several particulars, of the brief account given in the text, of the reign and death of King David ; in order to ascertain what is truly excellent and valuable in them.

It is observable that the three particulars for which the memory of King David is celebrated in the text, are, in the book of Proverbs, mentioned together, as some of those distinguishing blessings which religious wisdom has to bestow on those who will hearken to and follow her instructions : “ (b) Length of days is in her right hand, “ and in her left riches and honour ;” not that we are, therefore, to suppose that an adher-

(b) Proverbs, iii. 16.

adherence to the dictates of this wisdom will be productive of a constant and invariable distinction, between persons of this character and the rest of mankind, in the several respects just mentioned. Such, indeed, is the order and connection of things, which God has established, that the practice of virtue has, naturally, a beneficial tendency in each of these views; while the contrary effects naturally result from a vicious conduct. And under the Jewish dispensation, these original different tendencies of virtue and vice seem further to have been supported by the interposition of a special providence with regard to that people in favour of the righteous, and for the punishment of the wicked; agreeable to the particular sanctions of the Mosaic law, which, it is well known, were of a temporal nature. But, now, though the original order and tendency of things is the same, in every age, and with respect to every people under heaven: and the practice of righteousness must always have a friendly influence towards securing those blessings, which, in the passage before recited, wisdom is represented as holding in her hands, ready to confer on her followers

ers: yet, certain is it from fact and experience, that these favours are not universally enjoyed by the righteous, or appropriate to persons of this character; and cannot, therefore, be justly considered as flowing, in every case, from real worth and excellence in those who are possessed of them. How far, and on what accounts, each of these gifts reflects real worth on those Princes to whom they are granted, we now proceed to shew, by a distinct enlargement on them, according to the order in which they lie in the text, as related concerning King David.

The first particular, then, taken notice of in the text, is the length of his life and reign: "Thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem, and he died in a good old age, full of days." The whole of his reign was forty years; seven years in Hebron, and thirty-three years in Jerusalem. During the former of these periods, his government was very much confined to the tribe of Judah; but, after that, it was extended over all the twelve tribes; and as the history informs us that he was thirty years old when he began to reign, the whole

whole amount of his life, therefore, was seventy years: a life and reign, in those days, of no inconsiderable length!

It is not, however, the lot of every good King to be thus distinguished. Princes, as well as others, may fall victims to the stroke of death in early life. Those who bid fair for filling the seat of Majesty with eminent honour, and blessing a people as the guardian of their rights and liberties, may be cut off, before any, or but little, opportunity has been given them of exerting those great and noble qualities with which they were endowed: of which the history of this nation is not without affecting instances †. The time of the mightiest Monarch is alike in the hand of God as that of the meanest slave, and he lengthens or contracts it just as he sees fit. At that very instant, when the great arbiter of life and death pleases, their breath departs from them, and all their purposes are broken off.

But,

† King Edward the VIth and the Father of his present Majesty.

But, though the lives of all the Princes and Potentates of the earth are thus absolutely at the divine disposal; it is, yet, certain, as sobriety and temperance naturally conduce to the preservation of life, that Kings, as well as the rest of mankind, may, by the practice of these virtues, very much contribute towards securing to themselves the blessing of length of days, which is the natural fruit of them. And when God, in his all-wise Providence, is graciously pleased to lengthen out the life of a valuable King, to a good old age; and he, who is thus distinguished, has also distinguished himself, by those virtues which are naturally conducive to life and health; the old age of a King, of this character, and under such circumstances, does itself add a peculiar dignity to him while living, and must render the memory of him particularly venerable, when, through the unavoidable dissolution of worn-out nature, he is no more. There is a singular degree of respect due to old age, accompanied with virtue, wherever it be found. The hoary head of a good man cannot fail to be highly revered by all, but the most worthless

less and abandoned. And, surely, the respect and veneration, of which age is worthy, are not lessened when a King is the possessor of it. Has a nation been blessed with a King, whose life and reign have been continued to an unusual length; and who, throughout the course of his reign, truly merited the character of the father of his people; and the duration of whose life, under the favour of Providence, was not a little to be attributed to his temperate regular way of living, amidst all the fullness and elegancies of a royal table, and the pleasures of a court? certainly, old age, in the person of Majesty, adorned with such a character, must be eminently venerable; and not a little does it enforce the most respectful remembrance of such a King, that "he died in a good old age, full of days."

The second particular, for which David stands distinguished in the text, is, his riches. He was full of riches, as well as days. Now, not to enter particularly into the history of King David in this respect, which would be more critical than useful to our present purpose;

we would observe in general, that the riches of a King are, most properly, those of the nation over which he presides. Under these, are included the revenues to the crown; the produce of the trade and commerce of a kingdom, arising, either out of the materials of its own native growth or manufacture, the art or labour of its inhabitants, or from its settlements and plantations in other distant parts; its captures in war; and, in a word, whatever contributes, in any way, to the opulence of a nation. These are, most properly, the riches of a King; and, in the most important sense, he only can be said to be full of riches as a King, whose crown and kingdom have derived a considerable share of opulence, from the forementioned, and such like, sources. And so far as a King espouses and patronizes those measures alone which are lawful and honourable, for securing and increasing the national wealth; the riches of his kingdom, which are thus acquired, must, without doubt, reflect real worth on him; and aggrandize his character, together with his fortune.

Indeed

Indeed, where there is an undue stretch of power, to enhance the revenues of the state; illicit and base methods of commerce are carried on; unjust depredations made on other kingdoms; unprovoked hostilities commenced; captures unlawfully gotten in time of war; and such proceedings are countenanced or connived at by the Prince; supposing it possible for a state or kingdom to become, in any considerable degree, opulent by those measures; it will not admit of a dispute that the largest treasures, thus produced, could only serve as monuments, either of a criminal indolence of temper, or of the vilest artifice, in a King; and must render his name and memory exceeding infamous, in the eye of all who had any regard to the obligations of justice, or the interests of society in general.

But, where the authority of a state is not exercised beyond its proper limits; no unnecessary or rigorous exactions are made on the subject; no ways of traffick encouraged or admitted of, but such as justice and honour dictate; and a due regard is paid to the rights of other nations;

tions; when war is only engaged in, because made necessary by illegal hostile invasions of the undoubted property of a kingdom, from the adverse party, in violation of the most solemn treaties; and, in a war thus caused, care is taken that the known and allowed laws of war are strictly observed, and no fraudulent seizures made: when a state and kingdom have been thus managed; with a king at their head, whose constant aim and endeavour have been to establish, and promote, to the utmost of his ability, such righteous and equitable measures of conduct; and, by pursuing these measures, the national wealth is considerably augmented;—that a state and kingdom have, by these means, become eventually full of riches, is justly to be considered as redounding much to the credit of the King that ruled. And it can scarce fail to be true of such a King—that in every valuable sense he will be full of honour, both living and dying. Which suggests to our consideration

The last particular, as to King David, in the text; “He died full of honour,”

nour." And under this may be included, the glorious events with which his reign was distinguished; the accessions which he gained to the strength and grandeur of his kingdom; and the esteem and affection which he acquired among his people: all which, but especially the latter, constitute the HONOUR of a KING.

We cannot, indeed, but observe here, and it should be carefully attended to,—that the goodness of God is the original source of all national prosperity and happiness. Both riches and honour are his gifts. All the real glories of a King;—the stability and magnificence of his kingdom; and every addition that is made to them; an obedient and affectionate people: all these glories of a King come, originally, from him who is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and who is, therefore, to be adored and revered by the mightiest Kings and Potentates of the earth, as the Author of all that splendour in which they shine.

Accordingly, King David, in a noble strain of piety, thus addresses God, (c)
 "Thine,

(c) 1 Chron. xxix. 11, 12, 13.

“ Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the
 “ power, and the glory, and the victory,
 “ and the majesty; for all that is in the
 “ heaven and in the earth is thine. Thine
 “ is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art
 “ exalted as head above all. Both riches
 “ and honour come of thee, and thou reign-
 “ est over all: and in thine hand is power
 “ and might, and in thine hand it is to
 “ make great, and to give strength to all.
 “ Now therefore, our God, we thank thee,
 “ and praise thy glorious name.”

The dependence of Kings on the all-
 presiding Providence of God, does, how-
 ever, by no means detract from the worth
 and importance of those honours with
 which they are distinguished; or, in the
 least, eclipse that lustre which is hereby
 cast on their reign. But, on the contrary,
 —that these honours are the favours of
 the all-perfect Ruler of the world, is a
 consideration that really enhances the va-
 lue of them, and gives an additional
 weight of dignity to the Prince who is
 possessed of them.

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Has the reign of a King, then, been signalized, by many great and glorious events, in favour of the kingdom over which he ruled? Have the trade and commerce of the nation remarkably flourished in his time? When obliged to have recourse to war, in defence of his rights, have his arms been crowned with successes almost unparalleled, both as to their number and importance? Have his dominions, by means of these successes, been enlarged; and such additions made to them as were truly valuable; new sources of commerce laid open; or those of which the nation was before possessed, rendered more defensible against the invasions of the enemy, by new and considerable acquisitions in the surrounding country? Has the reign of a King been signalized by so many peculiarly great and glorious events; while no measures have been encouraged, for thus aggrandizing his kingdom, but such as were just and equitable: events like these, must render that reign, which has been so distinguished, highly honourable; and do, indeed, seem to point out the King, under whose

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administration they have taken place, as one whom God delighted to honour.

If, further, the King, who has been honoured by such glorious events in his reign, has, in an eminent degree, shared the still more valuable honour arising from the esteem and affection of his people; how compleat and exalted must be the glory of such a King! His honour, in the last view of it, carries in it a full and convincing testimony of real worth and excellence of character. A bad and worthless Prince may, indeed, be complimented with the fawning adulations of a few dependant or expecting Parasites, who would pay the same homage to that being who is the father of lies, could they hope to receive equal advantage from it. But a King who is highly esteemed by all orders and ranks of men, high and low, rich and poor; by those who have no expectations from him, but such as are common to all his subjects, terminating in his zealous attachment to the interests of the nation, and endeavour to secure its rights and liberties; a King, whose death, when become the object of apprehension,

hension, through his advanced age, is anticipated with great concern, and sincerely and deeply lamented when the dreaded event has come to pass; and this too, though there were the fairest appearances of a happy succession to the throne; a King who is thus honoured, it may well be presumed, is highly worthy of it, and has truly merited the character of the father of that people who bore such an affection towards him. Haughty and tyrannical Princes may be servilely feared, but a righteous and merciful King can alone be beloved by his people.

And here, if in any case, one would be apt to wish an exception from the general law of mortality; but religion checks the thought, suggesting—that it is the appointment of the great *Father* and *Governour* of the universe, that all the sons of men, even the greatest and best, Princes as well as others, must die, and return to their original dust. And to the will of that supremely wise, righteous, and merciful Being, should every nation be entirely submissive, whenever it pleases him to put a period to the life

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of their SOVEREIGN, however valuable and dear to them. Humanity cannot, indeed, but feel the stroke, and deeply deplore the loss, at the removal of a great and much-beloved KING; yet, since the Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away, ever magnified be his holy name. And the same Almighty Power, which has, at any time, set on the throne of a kingdom excellent and renowned Princes, can raise up others to succeed, inheriting the valuable endowments of their illustrious Ancestors, and whose reign shall be alike beneficial and honourable. And in this respect some nations have had abundant experience of the divine mercy. Which leads me

II. To represent the peculiar obligations which any people are under to the goodness of God, who, as in the case of David, on the removal of a great and venerable King, have the happiness of seeing the peaceful settlement of a successor to the throne, in whom they have just ground for pleasing expectations. On the demise of King David, Solomon reigned in his stead; a Prince remarkably well quali-

qualified for the important concerns of government. As the sacred historian informs us, (d) "The Lord magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed upon him such royal Majesty as had not been on any King before him in Israel." And to that God, who raised up, and, in this remarkable manner, dignified King Solomon, is the invaluable blessing of a happy succession to the throne of any kingdom, and in every instance, to be attributed.

Princes, as well as others, are the offspring of God. Every agreeable and happy connection, which they form, is under the superintendence and favour of his Providence. Their royal issue are (e) "the heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is his reward." It is by help obtained from him that they are carried safe through the dangers of infancy and youth, and reared to a state of manhood. Every lovely or promising quality with which a Prince is naturally

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(d) 1 Chron. xxix. 25. (e) Psa m 127 3.

endowed, to speak properly, is the gift of the *God of nature*. And from him come all the advantages which they enjoy, for enriching their minds with knowledge and wisdom, and forming them to a capacity for filling their high stations with usefulness and honour. The wise and affectionate parent, the faithful instructor and guardian, salutary counsels, and good examples, are all owing to the favourable dispositions of the Providence of God. Not that we would forget the praise that is due to a *princely Parent*, or any who have been concerned in the education of a *royal Progeny*, on account of the pains which they have taken, to instill into the tender minds of those committed to their care the principles of wisdom and virtue; for which service they are certainly entitled to the respect and honour of all the people of the land. Nor would we, by any means, lessen the merit accruing to a PRINCE himself, from a careful attention to the instructions given him, and his own personal endeavours to improve and adorn his mind; without which the best instructions, and the greatest external advantages, could be
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of no avail. But, at the same time, it is carefully to be remembered—that Princes, as well as the rest of mankind, are derived and dependant beings; that those who are fitted to rule, and likely to discharge that important trust greatly for the advantage of a nation, are raised up by God, and owe all their capacities for government, originally, to the favour of his Providence: and he is, therefore, supremely to be adored by all the inhabitants of a kingdom, which is at any time blessed with a Prince of this character. And O! how great is the goodness of God to a people, who have been distinguished by a repeated succession of such Princes; and who, on the removal of one whose life has been drawn out to an age at which very few of the sons of men arrive, have the consolation of beholding another of the same noble race, grown to a state of manhood, adorned with the most lovely and promising qualities, bidding fair, in every respect, to become, like his *great Ancestors*, the glory and delight of the nation; beholding, I say, such a PRINCE ascending the throne, with the general approbation and choice
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of persons of every order and rank, as fully expressing their satisfaction and joy on the occasion, as their concern at the death of their late venerable and most beloved King would admit of : O ! how unspeakably great is the goodness of God to a people whom he thus honoureth and blesteth ! How vast and complicated the favour !—to raise up another Successor of the same noble line, which has for a long time before, and with so much honour, filled the throne ; to qualify him so abundantly for the regal capacity ; to ripen his years to such a degree before the removal of his *royal Predecessor* ; and to give him so peaceful and honourable an accession to the throne, without any to dispute his right, and with general satisfaction and applause : what thanks are due to the great *King of Kings* and *Governour* of the nations, from a people on whom he confers such important blessings as these ! With what gratitude should they celebrate the mercy of the Lord towards them ! How careful should they be to express a lively sense of it ;—by walking before God in righteousness and holiness all the days of their lives ; by maintaining and
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testifying, in every proper way, their affection and loyalty to the King whom God has graciously given them, to repair the breach which his providence made; and by contributing, all that in them lies, towards rendering his reign as easy and glorious as those of his *renowned family* who have gone before him.

And such, now, O! ye people of this land, are the obligations which the goodness of God has brought you under: of which we would take some farther notice, after having reflected, a little, on the loss we have sustained in the removal of our late highly excellent and universally beloved King, *GEORGE the Second*.

And, changing only the place of government, what is related of King David in the text was not, in every particular, more strictly true of him than of the King whose death we deplore.

“ *Thirty and three years reigned King
“ GEORGE the Second in Britain;
“ and he died in a good old age, full of
“ days, riches, and honour.*”

But

But a very few weeks short of the term of *Seventy-seven* years was the life of our late SOVEREIGN, an age to which very few attain ; and to the continuance of which, be it mentioned to his honour, the known temperance and regularity of his life were, not a little, subservient: thus venerable was he become by his age! and yet, to the last, retained his capacity for engaging, as far as was necessary, in the business of the state; and shewed that affectionate concern for the welfare of his kingdom, which ever appeared to have had the strongest ascendancy in his heart.—That he was full of riches, in respect of the wealth of the nation over which he reigned, (the true riches of a King) as well as what was his own personal property, is well known to all who are in the least acquainted with the present state of the nation; and is sufficiently known in other countries, to excite the envy of their, comparatively, poor and petty monarchs: nor let inconsiderateness or rashness ever suggest the suspicion--that a King, who ruled like *GEORGE*

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the Second, did not regard the national wealth as his richest and most valuable treasure: and, be it remembered,—he was full of *honour* as well as riches. Was David's reign distinguished by glorious events in behalf of his kingdom? that of our late SOVEREIGN, was eminently so: witness, the flourishing condition of our trade and commerce; the repeated signal victories gained in the course of the present war; the many important acquisitions obtained, in various, and widely distant parts. And where is the King now living, in any other nation under heaven, who is venerated and beloved as was *Britain's* late King? And, indeed, who that lived under his government but must exceedingly respect and love him? Where is the subject whose right he ever attempted to invade? Whose property was not secure to him, and who did not enjoy the most valuable liberties under him? How merciful was his treatment of those who dared, most ungratefully, to rise up in rebellion against his righteous authority! making so few examples, among the numbers of impoverished desperate ruffians that embarked

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in this execrable undertaking. So steadily, indeed, did he act for the good of his country, and so uninterrupted was the flow of the various important blessings of his administration, that of those who were once his enemies, or very slightly regarded him, not a few, borne down by his long-tried and experienced goodness, have been converted into hearty and zealous friends to his person and government.

But, ah! the King whose character was so respectable, whose reign so glorious, and whom we all so much venerated and loved, is now numbered among the dead, and all his thoughts of concern and love for his people are perished. O! my *fellow Britons*, who but must deeply lament the loss of a King of such conspicuous and eminent worth? to drop the tear of affection, on an occasion like this, is becoming and manly; to be unaffected, the state only of the most unfeeling and ungrateful heart. But ye all, I am persuaded, and every true Briton, must be deeply sensible of the loss. Ever dear to you will be the memory of that great *King*, who is now fallen in this land: and his name must
ever

ever stand highly distinguished, by the annals of this nation, to the latest posterity.

But I must now turn your attention to the comfort which the abundant mercy of God has afforded us, under the removal of our late SOVEREIGN, by raising up a PRINCE of such hopes to reign in his stead : a PRINCE, born of the same illustrious house ; whose countenance is the aspect of dignity without arrogance, of manly thoughtfulness without severity, of good sense without affectation ; whose character is so fair and honourable ; and in whom we have the highest reason to promise ourselves, that he will act under the influence of the same noble principles, and pursue the same excellent measures of administration, as his departed *Grandfire* : and more than this, who can expect or even desire ? (*f*) Thus “ the Lord, who hath
“ torn, hath also healed us ; he, who hath
“ smitten, hath also bound us up.” How consolatory and pleasing must it be to that *well-accomplished and amiable Princess*, who has the honour to call our present So-

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(*f*) Hof. vi. 1.

VEREIGN—*Son*, under the very affecting loss of her royal Consort, and the other awful breaches that have been made on the family to which she is related, to see one so near her heart, filling the *British throne*, commencing Monarch of the seas, the terror of France, and the glory of distant lands ! And how inexpressibly reviving, my Countrymen, is the prospect to us all ! How could our great loss be better made up ! What stronger comfort and encouragement could have been afforded us.

To God, then, let our devout praises ascend, who has thus remembered his mercy towards us ; let his praises dwell on our lips, and to him let us pay the homage of a chearful and regular obedience to all his righteous laws.

For the King whom God has, in his abundant mercy, given to rule over us, let us offer up our fervent supplications, prayers, and intercessions ; to him let us ever render that honour, which is his due ; and steadily approve ourselves his obedient and affectionate subjects ; remembering,
that

that this is well-pleasing and acceptable in the sight of God.

To conclude,——That our *Sovereign, GEORGE the Third*, may be blessed with *length of Days*; that he may have the happiness of seeing his kingdom *greatly flourish* under his government; and that he may be *full of honour*: may that God, who ruleth over all, and is the fountain of all good, of his infinite mercy grant! And let all the people say, *Amen*, and *Amen*.

F I N I S.



